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K. Kew  
9/18/05

Appl. No.: 09/478,598  
Amdt. dated 12/23/2004  
Reply to Office action of September 29, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

1-68. (canceled)

69. (currently amended) A method for altering the amino acid composition of  $[[a]]$  VSP $\beta$  as set forth in SEQ ID NO:1, said method comprising:

- a) introducing amino acid changes into VSP $\beta$  to create an engineered VSP $\beta$  having increased nutritional value, wherein said amino acid changes increase levels of at least one nutritionally essential amino acid in the engineered VSP $\beta$  so that nutritionally essential amino acids are increased to represent at least 5% - 10% of the total amino acid content of the engineered VSP $\beta$ ; and
- b) assessing the conformation of said engineered VSP $\beta$  based on its ability to bind with a set of antibodies, wherein said antibodies bind to native VSP $\beta$ ;

wherein said antibodies also bind to the engineered protein.

70-74. (canceled)

75. (previously presented) The method of Claim 69, wherein at least one of said at least one nutritionally essential amino acid or nutritionally essential amino acids is methionine.

76. (previously presented) The method of Claim 69, wherein said amino acid changes are introduced into predetermined sites.

77. (previously presented) The method of Claim 76, wherein said predetermined sites are determined by secondary structure prediction or homology comparison.

78. (previously presented) The method of Claim 69, wherein said amino acid changes are introduced at random.